

REMARKS

The above amendments to the above-captioned application along with the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated June 14, 2006 (U.S. Patent Office Paper No. 20060524). In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to give due reconsideration to this application, to indicate the allowability of the claims, and to pass this case to issue.

Status of the Claims

As outlined above, claims 1-8, 10-12, and 14-15 stand for consideration in this application, wherein claims 9, 13, 16 and 17 are being canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, while claims 1, 4, 10 and 14 are being amended to correct formal errors and to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject invention.

All amendments to the application are fully supported therein. Applicant hereby submits that no new matter is being introduced into the application through the submission of this response.

Formal Rejections

Claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. As mentioned above, claim 17 is being canceled, and therefore this rejection is moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4, 13, 16, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claims 1 and 4 are being amended so as to have proper antecedent basis for the limitation in the claims. Claims 13, 16, and 17 are being canceled, and therefore, the rejection of claims 13, 16 and 17 are moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 4, 13, 16, and 17 is respectfully requested.

Prior Art Rejections

The First 35 U.S.C. §102(b) rejection

Claims 13 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Matsushima et al (US Pat. No. 6000035). As mentioned above, claims 13 and 16 are being cancelled, and therefore the rejection of claims 13 and 16 is moot.

The Second 35 U.S.C. §102(b) rejection

Claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Mizuyabu et al. (US Pat. No. 7036032). As mentioned above, claim 17 is being cancelled, and therefore the rejection of claim 17 is moot.

35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection

Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Matsushima in view of Soga (US Pat. No. 4145735). As mentioned above, claim 9 is being cancelled, and therefore the rejection of claim 9 is moot.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for holding that claims 1-8 are allowed. Applicants further thank the Examiner for holding that claims 10-12 and 14-15 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. As suggested by the Examiner, claims 10 and 14 are being amended so as to be in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The base claim 10 and 14 being allowable, corresponding dependent claims 11-12 and 15 must also be allowable.

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's statement of reasons for allowance as set forth in the Office Action. However, Applicant will point out that the reasons for allowability of the above referenced claims are not limited to the reasons for allowance as set forth in the Office Action.

Conclusion

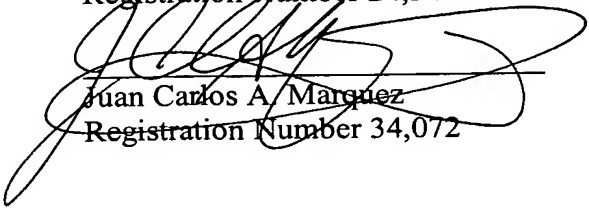
In view of all the above, Applicants respectfully submit that certain clear and distinct differences as discussed exist between the present invention as now claimed and the prior art references upon which the rejections in the Office Action rely. These differences are more than sufficient that the present invention as now claimed would not have been anticipated nor rendered obvious given the prior art. Rather, the present invention as a whole is distinguishable, and thereby allowable over the prior art.

Favorable reconsideration of this application as amended is respectfully solicited. Should there be any outstanding issues requiring discussion that would further the

prosecution and allowance of the above-captioned application, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the address and phone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

Stanley P. Fisher
Registration Number 24,344



Juan Carlos A. Marquez
Registration Number 34,072

REED SMITH LLP
3110 Fairview Park Drive
Suite 1400
Falls Church, Virginia 22042
(703) 641-4200

September 8, 2006
SPF/JCM/YOM